

Deaf Culture Question of the Week – Nov 7-11, 2011 Bill Newell,
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But "future" and "will" are signed the same, aren't they?

____ True or ____ False
Scroll down for the answer.

Answer: “False” – You may recall another DCQW that discussed how signs are made. Signs are created when four or sometimes five parts are combined. These are (1) handshape(s), (2) locations where the signs are made, (3) movements of the hands, (4) directions the palms are facing, and sometimes (5) non-manual signals like head movement or facial expressions.

The signs **future** and **will** do look similar but they are not exactly the same. They use the same handshape, location, and palm orientation but the movement of each is different and **will** adds a headnod. **Future** has a longer, extended arc-like movement forward of the closed-5 handshape. **Will** has a shorter, more direct non-arching forward movement and is accompanied by the non-manual signal of headnod. These differences communicate the two different meanings very clearly.

But don't **future** and **will** mean the same thing? Why are they signed differently?

Not really. **Future** communicates about the time an event will happen. **Will** communicates the intention to do something.

Here is a sentence that uses both signs and communicates their meanings and usages clearly.

Future go-to college me will.

In English this sentence would be translated: I plan to go to college (at some future time). You can imagine this being stated by a high school student for example.

In the ASL sentence the sign ***future*** establishes that going to college will happen at some future time and the sign ***will*** means there is an intention to go to college.

So ***future*** and ***will*** may look somewhat similar but they are two different signs and they express different meanings in ASL. Pretty cool, huh?

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